

Message Text

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SUBJ: COMITE OF 24'S CURRENT WORKING PAPER ON

SEYCHELLES AND ST. HELENA

EXCERPT FROM THE COMITE'S WORKING PAPER OF MARCH 12,
DEALING WITH COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA, IS
REPRODUCED BELOW.

QUOTE

"BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

18. INFORMATION CONCERNING THE "BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN
TERRITORY" PRIOR TO DECEMBER 1972 IS CONTAINED IN LAST YEAR'S
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE. E/ BRIEFLY, IT WILL
BE RECALLED THAT THE "BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY",
COMPRISING THREE ISLANDS DETACHED FROM THE SEYCHELLES (ALDABRA,
FARQUHAR AND DESROCHES), TOGETHER WITH THE CHAGOS
ARCHIPELAGO, FORMERLY PART OF MAURITIUS, WAS ESTABLISHED AS A
SEPARATE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT UNDER A UNITED KINGDOM
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ORDER-IN-COUNCIL OF 8 NOVEMBER 1965. ACCORDING TO THE

ADMINISTERING POWER, THE ARRANGEMENT WAS MADE WITH THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE SEYCHELLES AND MAURITIUS, WHICH WERE COMPENSATED FOR THE LOSS OF THE ISLANDS AND ATOLLS. (IN THE CASE OF THE SEYCHELLES, THE COMPENSATION TOOK THE FORM OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON MAHE WHICH IS THE BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURIST INDUSTRY IN THE TERRITORY.

19. THE ISLANDS WERE DETACHED FROM THE SEYCHELLES TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF MILITARY STAGING FACILITIES BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICAN WHICH IN 1966 ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE JOINT USE OF ANY FACILITIES THAT MIGHT BE CONSTRUCTED. IN THE SPRING OF 1973, FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF A SECOND AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, THE UNITED STATES INSTALLED A LIMITED NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY ON DIEGO GARCIA, AN INHABITED ISLAND IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO. THE PURPOSE OF THE FACILITY IS TO PROVIDE A LINK WITH UNITED STATES DEFENCE COMMUNICATIONS. IT IS EXPECTED TO FURNISH IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR, AND FACILITATE THE SUPPLY AND REFUELING OF , SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN OWNED OR OPERATED BY, OR ON GEHALD OF EITHER GOVERNMENT.

20. IN FEBRUARY 1974, IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO EXPAND THE FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA. IN A STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON FEBRUARY 5 1974, JULIAN AMERY, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE FOREGN OFFICE, SAID THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT WELCOMED THE EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES FACILITIES, WHICH WOULD ALSO BE AVAILABLE FOR USE BY THE UNITED KINGDOM, AS IT HAD LONG FELT THAT IT WAS DESIRABLE IN THE GENERAL WESTERN INTEREST TO BALANCE OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA. HE ADDED THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD CONSULT PERIODICALLY ON JOINT OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA.

21. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES FACILITIES IS EXPECTED TO COST FROM \$US 30 MILLION AND WILL INCLUDE: LENGTHENING OF THE AIRPORT RUNWAY FROM 8,000 TO 12,000 FEET, SO THAT IT CAN BE USED BY ALMOST ANY TYPE OF AIRCRAFT, FULLY LOADED; DEEPENING OF THE HARBOUR; INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL FUEL STORAGE TANKS; AND PROVISION OF MAINTENANCE UNCLASSIFIED

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FACILITIES FOR AIR STRIPS AND AIRCRAFT. THESE FACILITIES ARE DESCRIBED IN PRESS REPORTS AS THE FIRST PERMANENT UNITED STATES BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE PRESENT CONTINGENT OF 375 MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL BE EXPANDED TO A STAFF NUMBERING FROM 500 TO 600 WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

22. THESE PLANS ARE OPPOSED BY A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA, AND PARTICULARLY BY INDIA. ON 6

FEBRUARY 1973 , SWARAN SINGH, FOREIGN MINISTER
OF INDIA, CALLED THE EXPANSION A "MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN"
TO HIS COUNTRY AND EXPRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S "TOTAL OPPOSITION"
TO IT. MR, SINGH SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD EXPRESSED
ITS DEEP CONCERN" TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE UNITED STATES REGARDING THE BRINGING OF NAVAL UNITS,
INCLUDING AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, INTO THE REGION, AND ADDED THAT SUCH
A "SHOW OF FORCE" WOULD NEVER BE "RELISHED" BY ANY COUNTRY
IN THE REGION.

23. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT, AT ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION,
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ITS RESOLUTION 2832 (XXVI) OF
16 DECEMBER 1971, SOLEMNLY DECLARED THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN,
WITHIN LIMITS TO BE DETERMINED, TOGETHER WITH THE AIR SPACE ABOVE
AND THE OCEAN FLOOR SUBJACENT THERETO, WAS DESIGNATED FOR
ALL TIME AS A ZONE OF PEACE. IT ALSO CALLED UPON THE GREAT
POWERS TO ENTER INTO IMMEDIATE CONSULTATION WITH THE LITTORAL
STATES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH A VIEW TO HALTING FURTHER
ESCALATION AND EXPANSION OF THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE
INDIAN OCEAN AND ELIMINATING ALL BASES, MILITARY INSTALLATIONS
AND LOGISTICAL SUPPLY FACILITIES, AS WELL AS ANY MANIFESTATION
OF GREAT POWER MILITARY PRESENCE CONCEIVED IN THE CONTEXT
OF GREAT POWER RIVALRY.

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